

## VETERANS AND MEDICAL CANNABIS: TOP TIPS FOR OBTAINING YOUR ILLINOIS MEDICAL CANNABIS CARD

by edfarmer | Aug 21, 2017

Are you a Illinois Veteran who needs help obtaining your medical cannabis card? Below are six tips Veterans need to know about how to obtain a medical cannabis card in Illinois:

1. Have a qualifying condition. To be eligible for a medical cannabis card in Illinois, you must be diagnosed with one of debilitating conditions as defined by the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Act. Some of the approved conditions that are prevalent in the Veteran community are discussed below. Other conditions can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health website.

**Amotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS):** Veterans are at a statistically significant greater risk of developing ALS compared to civilians. Service connection by presumption is available for any veteran that develops ALS at any time after discharge.

**Hepatitis C:** A large number of Vietnam Era Veterans are infected with Hepatitis C from the re-using of syringes and lancing devices by Military healthcare personnel.

**Multiple Sclerosis:** If symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis develop within seven years of discharge, it is presumed to have been incurred in service.

**Parkinson's disease:** Parkinson's is a condition presumed related to Agent Orange exposure. It is also presumed to have been incurred in service if symptoms manifest within one year after discharge.

**Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** According to statistics on the VA's website, PTSD occurs in 10 percent of Gulf War veterans and in about 30 percent of Vietnam veterans.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** TBI has been found to be more prevalent in veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan in support of Operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom. The increased incidence of TBI in veterans who served in these conflicts has been linked to exposure to blasts from improvised explosive devices.

**Severe fibromyalgia:** Many Persian Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans suffer from Fibromyalgia, one of the conditions thought to be caused by exposure to biological and environmental hazards in Southwest Asia.

2. Physician Written Certification may not be needed. Where you receive your medical care depends on whether or not you need a physician certification.

**Veterans Receiving Care from a Private Physician:** If you receive care from a private physician, ask them to complete the Physician's Written Certification Form. The physician does not have to prescribe or recommend medical cannabis for your condition. The physician must certify that the Veteran is under their care for one of the qualifying conditions. An in-person medical examination must be within 90 days of submitting your application.

**Veterans Receiving Care at the Veterans Health Administration:** VA physicians are prohibited from completing the Physician's Written Certification Form. Therefore, Veteran's receiving care at the VA can bypass the doctor's certification by providing a copy of your DD-214 and their most recent 12 months of VA health records which shows their qualifying condition and ongoing care. Records can be retrieved at [myhealth.va.gov](http://myhealth.va.gov) or by sending in VA Form 10-5345a to the VA facility which you receive treatment.

3. Veterans qualify for reduced application fee: Fill in all parts of the application, choose a dispensary and sign the last page. Select a one, two, or three year fee. Veterans receive fifty percent off their application fees! Make sure to include a copy of your DD-214.

4. Send a proper photograph. A selfie won't work for the application! Visit a business that provides passport photos (i.e. Walgreens). You want a 2 x 2 inch passport photo. You must be facing the camera, with your full-face showing. The picture must be taken against a plain, white backdrop with absolutely nothing in the background.

5. Don't forget your fingerprints! Contact a live scan fingerprint vendor that provides Medical Cannabis fingerprints. Remember to bring the fingerprint consent form to the vendor and add the Transaction Control Number (TCN) to your form. Once you have your fingerprints taken, the fingerprint consent form and the receipt provided by the live scan fingerprint vendor containing the TCN must be sent in with your application. Fingerprints must be taken within 30 days of submitting your application

6. Provide proof of residency. You must be an Illinois resident to receive Illinois medical cannabis. You need two items to prove that you live in Illinois. The addresses on each of the documents must match the address on your application. Bank statements, utility bills, state ID, driver's license and voter ID cards are all acceptable. If you are a homeless Veteran, complete the homeless status certification found on [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com)

The above are only tips for Veterans applying for Illinois medical cannabis cards. Additional requirements may be necessary. If you have questions, please check with the Illinois Division of Medical Cannabis before sending your application.

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<http://www.vetlawoffice.com/2017/08/veterans-medical-cannabis-top-tips-obtaining-illinois-medical-cannabis-card/>

## Medical Marijuana in Illinois Grade B+ (But Likely not for Spine Patients)

Although the Americans for Safe Access rated Illinois very highly, (it got a B+), this may or may not mean anything to people with back or neck problems.

It depends on your diagnosis. Use of medical marijuana for chronic pain is not allowed, nor is it allowed for injuries that interfere with your daily activities, for cervical dystonia (wry neck) or "other conditions, as determined in writing by patient's physician."

But Illinois **does** allow medical marijuana use for [arthritis](#), damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord, and arachnoiditis.

In Illinois, you can get up to 2.5 ounces every two weeks from one of 60 dispensaries supplied by 22 cultivation centers. But you cannot grow your own in this state.

These are some of the rules of a temporary program enacted by the 2013 Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act (HB 1). This law applies only to "qualifying patients" and will have to be extended by December 31, 2017, if it is to continue (or another law will need to be passed in its place).

## Inflammation

Most back pain cases are due to inflammation causing degenerative disc disease. As you might already know, medical weed is an outstanding natural medicine for addressing inflammation and chronic pain. Therefore, it's no surprise that patients suffering from back pain due to degenerative disc disease find relief with this treatment as well.

## Best Strains of Marijuana to Use for Back Pain

According to Dr. Mike Hart, Head Physician at Marijuana for Trauma in Ontario, Canada, indica strains seem to help [ease patients' pain better](#) than hybrid or sativa strains because of the higher [THC content](#).

However, when considering medical marijuana for back pain, the saying "less is more" holds true.

Indica strains are more effective in lower doses and could worsen pain in higher doses. But there are some good quality sativa and hybrid strains that are worth trying for pain and your other back pain symptoms.

Just remember to start slow and work your way up to higher doses if needed.

Below are some good [strains of medical cannabis](#) when you're struggling with back pain.

- **Bubba Kush (Indica):** Bubba Kush contains up to 22 percent THC and up to 0.1 percent [CBD](#). It's good for lowering your stress and easing muscle tension.
- **Candyland (Sativa):** With around 24 percent of THC and one percent of CBD and CBN, Candyland is a great strain to reduce pain and relieve your muscle tension. It also has stimulating effects, so it's good for fatigue.
- **Headband (Hybrid):** Contains up to 27 percent THC, but lower CBD content of less than one percent. Headband eases pain and relaxes muscle strains. It lasts longer than other strains too.
- **OG Kush (Indica):** Contains up to 23 percent THC and around one percent CBD. Works well for muscle spasms and relieving pain.
- **ACDC (Sativa):** ACDC is high in CBD but low in THC. It contains up to 24 percent CBD and around 1.2 percent THC, making it great for reducing your pain without the psychoactive effects.

## Best Methods of Marijuana Treatment to Use to Treat Back Pain Symptoms

Use cannabis for back pain topically or internally to find relief. Some of the best [methods of using medical weed](#) include:

- **Inhalation (vaporizing or smoking):** When you inhale medical weed you'll find immediate relief, usually after only a minute or two).

- **Raw Juice:** Juicing your medical pot works like a dietary supplement where you drink it a few times a day. It relieves your pain without the psychoactive effect because it's not heated.
- **Tinctures:** You swallow tinctures or place them under your tongue. When you take them under your tongue, you'll get quick results, although as quickly as you will with smoking.
- **Edibles:** You get a slower effect with edibles since they are essentially food and will have to make it through your digestive tract so your liver can metabolize it. However, you'll get longer lasting relief and typically a better psychotropic effect.
- **Oils:** Marijuana oils offer you a completely different experience. You use oils in small doses and then scale them up. Oils deliver your body high concentrated amounts of cannabinoids.  
<https://www.marijuanadoctors.com/conditions/back-pain/>  
<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/medical-cannabis>

### Who Qualifies for Medicinal Marijuana in Illinois

In August of 2013, Governor Pat Quinn of Illinois signed and enacted into legislation, a proposed medical marijuana measure, that was responsible for establishing an alternative treatment for serious disease causing chronic pain and debilitating conditions. The intended purpose of this Act is to protect patients with debilitating medical conditions, as well as their physicians and providers, from arrest and prosecution, criminal and other penalties, and property forfeiture, if the patients engage in the medicinal use of cannabis.

Entitled The Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act, the measure establishes a patient registry program, protects registered qualifying patients and registered designated caregivers from "arrest, prosecution, or denial of any right or privilege," and allows for the registration of cultivation centers and medical marijuana dispensing organizations. Once the act goes into effect on January 1st of 2014, "a tax is imposed upon the privilege of cultivating medical cannabis at a rate of seven percent of the sales price per ounce."

### What Ailments Qualify For Medical Cannabis in Illinois

Patients in Illinois diagnosed with one of the following severe, debilitating, or life-threatening medical conditions, are afforded legal protection under the Illinois Medical Marijuana law, as per the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Pilot Program Act:

- **Cancer, glaucoma, positive status for human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), hepatitis C, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Crohn's disease, agitation of Alzheimer's disease, cachexia/wasting syndrome, muscular dystrophy,**

severe fibromyalgia, spinal cord disease (including but not limited to arachnoiditis), Tarlov cysts, hydromyelia syringomyelia, Rheumatoid arthritis, fibrous dysplasia, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury and post concussion syndrome, Multiple Sclerosis, Arnold-Chiari malformation and Syringomyelia, Spinocerebellar Ataxia (SCA), Parkinson's Disease, Tourette Syndrome, Myoclonus, Dystonia, Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, RSD (Complex Regional Pain Syndromes Type I), Causalgia, CRPS (Complex Regional Pain Syndrome Type II), Neurofibromatosis, Chronic inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy, Sjogren's Syndrome, Lupus, Interstitial Cystitis, Myasthenia Gravis, Hydrocephalus, nail-patella syndrome or residual limb pain; autism; peripheral neuropathy; post-concussion syndrome; terminal illness

- or the treatment of these conditions.
- **Seizures, including those related to epilepsy, effective January 01, 2015**
- **PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), signed into law on June 30th, 2016 (P.A. 99-0519).**

\* **Please note:** As per the passing of Senate Bill 10, two new medical conditions have been added to the qualifying list of medical conditions:

- post-traumatic stress disorder;
- patients with a terminal illness and prognosis of fewer than six months to live

### How to Become A Medical Marijuana Patient in Illinois

1. Must be at least 18 Years Of Age
2. Must be a Legal resident in the state of Illinois with proof of residency
3. The qualifying patient has been diagnosed by a physician as having a debilitating medical condition and has obtained medical records showing the diagnosis of that condition — \*Learn how to [request your medical records](#)
4. Obtain written documentation from a physician licensed in the state of Illinois stating that, you are a qualifying patient. Be sure to bring your medical records with you to your appointment — \*Find a certified [medical marijuana physician in Illinois](#)
5. Upon receiving a recommendation from a physician, patients are required to register with the Illinois Department of Public Health, upon which he or she will receive a state-issued medical marijuana I.D. card.

- Agitation of Alzheimer's disease
- HIV/AIDS
- Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Arnold-Chiari malformation
- Cancer
- Causalgia
- Chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy
- Crohn's disease
- CRPS (complex regional pain syndrome Type II)
- Dystonia
- Fibrous Dysplasia
- Glaucoma
- Hepatitis C
- Hydrocephalus
- Hydromyelia
- Interstitial cystitis
- Lupus
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Myasthenia Gravis
- Myoclonus
- Nail-patella syndrome
- Neurofibromatosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Post-Concussion Syndrome
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Reflex sympathetic dystrophy
- Residual limb pain
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Seizures (including those characteristic of Epilepsy)
- Severe fibromyalgia
- Sjogren's syndrome
- Spinal cord disease (including but not limited to arachnoiditis)
- Spinal cord injury is damage to the nervous tissue of the spinal cord with objective neurological indication of intractable spasticity
- Spinocerebellar ataxia
- Siringomyelia
- Tarlov cysts
- Tourette syndrome
- Traumatic brain injury
- Cachexia/wasting syndrome